

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 and 15-19 remain in the application. Claims 1 and 15 have been amended. Claims 20-25 have been canceled.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to specify that the base of the third segment has at least one opening, through which at least one opening residual liquid accumulating in the well of the third segment flows into the second segment. Support for this amendment can be found at page 7, lines 3-6 of the specification and in FIGS. 2 and 3 of the drawings.

This change addresses some of the Examiner's responses to the arguments submitted previously. Applicants have now positively claimed an opening that traverses the segments of the connector. The "base" and the "opening" are structural limitations that establish the openings 52, 52a as a trans-segmental passageway. The term "opening" has been used in place of the term "outlet" so as to avoid the use of two words for the same element. The functional recitation, i.e., "through which opening residual liquid accumulating in said well of said third segment flows into said second segment", remains, but only to clarify the use of the structural features. Applicants are not required to employ the "means plus function" terminology. In fact, such "means plus function" terminology is frowned upon by the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

Claim 15 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 20-25. Support for this amendment can be found at page 5, lines 11-15, at page 5, lines 20-24, and at page 5, line 31 through page 6, line 3 of the specification and in claims 20-26, as originally filed.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 U. S. C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by US 1,366,789 to Graham. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Graham, United States Patent No. 1,366,789 (hereinafter "Graham"), discloses a liquid receptacle attachment having a base and a plurality of projections extending to substantially the same distance therefrom and adapted to form closures for receptacles having mouths of

different sizes. The projections are sized to engage a small, medium, or large-necked bottle, as needed.

Claim 1 of the application, and the claims depending from claim 1, require that the base 34 of the third segment 16 of the connector 10 have at least one opening 52, 52a, through which at least one opening residual liquid accumulating in the well of the third segment 16 flows into the second segment 14. The underlined portion of the previous sentence is an unmistakable disclosure of a structural limitation in which an opening is positively claimed. Furthermore, the functional terminology has been replaced by structural terminology, i.e., base having an opening. At page 7, lines 3-6 of the specification, it is stated:

The connector 10 preferably contains residue outlets 52 and 52a, in order to allow liquid residue accumulating in the well of the third segment 16 to flow more rapidly when the second segment 14 is attached to a container having a mouth having a diameter of relatively intermediate size.

These residue outlets, i.e., openings in the base of the third segment, are neither disclosed nor suggested by Graham. The outlet opening of the stopple disclosed in Graham (reference numeral 22) enables fluid to flow out of a container through a hose, pipe, or tube to a destination external to the stopple. The residue outlets, or openings, 52, 52a, recited in claim 1 of this application enable residual fluid accumulating in the well of the third segment 16 of the connector 10 to flow from the third segment 16 of the connector 10 to the second segment 14 of the connector 10 more rapidly when the second segment 14 is attached to a container having a mouth having a diameter of relatively intermediate size. In the absence of these openings, the rate of flow of the accumulated fluid is decreased. Flow of fluid from the third segment 16 of the connector 10 to the second segment 14 of the connector 10 of this application involves flow of fluid from an internal starting point (i.e., the third segment) to an internal destination (i.e., the second segment). Graham does not disclose or

suggest any means for residual fluid to be drained from one chamber in the interior of the stopple shown therein to another chamber in the interior of the stopple shown therein.

The outlet opening 22 of the stopple disclosed in Graham is designed to communicate with a hose, pipe, or tube, whereby fluid flows from a container through the outlet opening 22 of the stopple and then into the tube leading to a location external of the stopple. See page 2, column 1, lines 12-18 of Graham. The residue outlets, or openings, 52, 52a, of the connector of this invention are not designed to communicate with a hose, pipe, or tube for transfer to a position located external to the connector. In Graham, the outlet opening 22 of the stopple extending through the tubular projection 23 allows liquid to flow from the container 10 into and through the hose, pipe, or tube 15. The outlet opening 22 of the stopple described in Graham does not allow liquid to flow substantially laterally from the inner circle of the body 16 to the middle circle of the body 16. (The receptacle engaging projections 17, 18, and 19 of the body 16 form three concentric circles of the body 16.) For the connector of this invention to enable this substantially lateral flow of liquid, the residue outlets, or openings, 52, 52a, of the connector of this invention are placed in substantially different positions relative to the position of the outlet 22 shown in Graham. For these reasons, Graham does not anticipate claims 1-11.

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U. S. C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over US 1,366,789 to Graham in view of US 4,614,437 to Buehler. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Buehler, United States Patent No. 4,614,437 (hereinafter "Buehler"), discloses a mixing container and an adapter to interconnect the mixing container to a second container to permit intermixing of the contents of the containers. The mixing container has a neck with a plurality of raised circumferential ribs thereon. The adapter has a central cylindrical sleeve. A first end of the sleeve is surrounded by a cylindrical skirt. The interior surface of the first end of the sleeve has a plurality of circumferential grooves which enable the adapter to engage the ribs on the neck of the mixing container. The interior surface of the cylindrical

skirt has a screw thread to enable the adapter to engage a conventional threaded container neck. The opposite, or second end, end of the sleeve has a cutting sleeve therein, concentric with the sleeve. The cutting sleeve is adapted to pierce a seal on the mixing container.

Claim 12 depends from claim 1. Claim 1 specifies that the third segment 16 of the connector 10 has a base 34 having a wall 36 projecting from the base 34 to form a well, the base 34 of the third segment 16 of the connector 10 having at least one opening 52, 52a, through which at least one opening residual liquid accumulating in the well of the third segment 16 flows into the second segment 14. Neither Graham nor Buehler discloses or suggests any means for residual fluid to be drained from the interior of one segment of a connector to the interior of another segment of a connector. Draining of residual fluid internally, from the well of the third segment 16 of the connector 10 to the second segment 14 of the connector 10, allows fluid to flow faster. For this reason, the combination of Graham and Buehler does not render claim 12 obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Claims 13 and 15-25 stand rejected under 35 U. S. C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over US 1,366,789 to Graham in view of US 4,614,437 to Buehler in view of US 4,010,756 to DuMont et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

DuMont et al., United States Patent No. 4,010,756 (hereinafter "DuMont et al."), discloses a surgical electrode consisting of an insulated stainless steel wire having needles conductively affixed at one or both ends, at least one needle having a blunt end with a straight shank and having a weakened zone between the straight shank and the opposite pointed end of the needle whereby the pointed end may be snapped off and the straight shank used as an electrical jack for connection to a pacemaker or similar electric current generating or monitoring device.

Claim 13 depends from claim 12, which depends from claim 1. Claim 1 specifies that the third segment 16 of the connector 10 has a base 34 having a wall 36 projecting from the base 34 to form a well, the base 34 of the third segment 16 of the connector 10 having at least one opening

52, 52a, through which at least one opening residual liquid accumulating in the well of the third segment 16 flows into the second segment 14. None of Graham, Buehler, or DuMont et al. discloses or suggests any means for residual fluid to be drained from the interior of one segment of a connector to the interior of another segment of a connector. Draining of residual fluid internally, from the well of the third segment 16 of the connector 10 to the second segment 14 of the connector 10, allows fluid to flow faster. For this reason, the combination of Graham, Buehler, and DuMont et al. does not render claim 13 obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

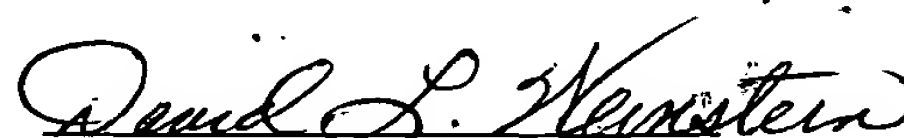
Claim 15, as amended, specifies the nature of the joining means for each segment. Buehler shows threads as joining means. Graham also shows threads as joining means. DuMont et al., which has nothing to do with containers, does not show any means for joining a connector to a container. None of the references relied on by the Examiner discloses or suggests a ring as a means for joining the connector to a container. Furthermore, none of the references relied on by the Examiner discloses or suggests the particular arrangement of means for joining the connector to a container, as required by claims 15-19 of this application. For these reasons, the combination of Graham, Buehler, and DuMont et al. does not render claims 15-19 obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that claims 1-13, as amended, and 15-19 are in condition for allowance, and official Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

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